



Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education
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Questions and Answers for Students

Regarding the Closure of the

Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education (Bureau)

June 1, 2007

Current law, Education Code section 94999, provides that the Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education Reform Act (Act) will become inoperative (sunset) on July 1, 2007. However, the current Act remains in full force and effect until July 1.

Will there still be a Bureau after July 1?

No. There will no longer be staff or resources to continue the operations of the Bureau. However, the Department of Consumer Affairs plans to provide some assistance to students after July 1. You can subscribe to receive updates regarding the Bureau's sunset at <http://www.bppve.ca.gov/subscribe.htm>.

As currently drafted, a legislative proposal, Assembly Bill (AB) 1525 (Cook), intends to permit the Department to assume some of the Bureau's functions. This would include payment of pending, eligible Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF) claims and investigation of student complaints.

This bill is intended to cover the anticipated time the Bureau is closed. This bill is an urgency bill, which means that the bill would become effective immediately upon signature by the Governor.

It is important to note that AB 1525 can be modified at any time and is subject to approval by both houses of the Legislature and action by the Governor.

After July 1, will there be a new Bureau?

We hope so. Senate Bill (SB) 823 (Perata), is the reform act intended to create a new agency to succeed the Bureau on January 1, 2008. Currently, this bill and AB 1525 are mutually dependent; each bill is subject to the Legislative process and Governor's action to become operative.

We recommend that you read and track these two legislative proposals. It is important to note that, like AB 1525, SB 823 can be modified at any time. You can subscribe to receive electronic updates on these bills at <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/billinfo.html>.

If I am a student attending a Bureau-approved institution, how does the Bureau's sunset affect my ability to qualify as a candidate to sit for a licensing examination, such as for a Licensed Vocational Nurse, Marriage and Family Therapist, or Psychologist?

The boards that regulate these professions may have the authority to continue to recognize graduates of schools that were approved by the Bureau even after the July 1, 2007, closure date. For additional information, you may wish to contact the specific licensing board directly.

In addition, a provision of AB 1525, discussed above, is intended to allow institutions to retain their approvals for the purpose of interpreting laws that require graduation from a Bureau-approved institution as a qualification for licensure. This bill is an urgency bill, which means that the bill would become effective immediately upon signature by the Governor.

It is important to note that AB 1525 can be modified at any time and is subject to approval by both houses of the Legislature and action by the Governor.

I attended a Bureau-approved school that has closed. How can I get a copy of my transcript or a letter that confirms that the closed school was once approved by the Bureau?

After July 1, you can send a written request to the Department of Consumer Affairs at the above post office box address. You can also email the request to bppve@dca.ca.gov. These are the best ways to submit your request.

If you need immediate assistance, you can call the Department's Consumer Information Center (CIC) at 1-800-952-5210 to speak to a live operator. The operator will take your request and forward it to the appropriate departmental personnel for a response.

If I have filed a STRF claim before the Bureau sunsets, will the claim be paid?

The Bureau will continue to process eligible student claims through June 30, 2007. However, payment is contingent upon whether there are sufficient funds to pay the claims.

If there aren't sufficient funds, what will happen to my claim after July 1, 2007?

It depends on whether any new law addresses this issue. Under proposed AB 1525, discussed above, eligible STRF claims may remain pending for payment in the future.

What happens if my school closes after July 1, 2007? Who will help me?

The Department will attempt to assist you. You can email the Department at bppve@dca.ca.gov or contact the Department's Consumer Information Center at 1-800-952-5210.

The best option for students faced with a school closure is to retain credits earned, continue their course of studies and obtain their certificate or degree. For most students, this involves a transfer to another school.

If continuing studies is not possible, students may consider other options.

Here are four key options for students faced with a school closure:

TRANSFER

Students may be able to transfer credits to another school offering similar courses. They should contact other schools that offer similar courses and inquire about transfer eligibility. For a list of degree-granting schools approved by the Bureau prior to June 30, 2007, students can visit the Bureau's Web site at <http://www.bppve.ca.gov/>.

TEACH-OUT

Students who are within 90 days of graduation may be able to complete their studies at the closing school or other schools. The Department would help students explore whether this "teach-out" option can be made available.

SCHOOL REFUND

Students can request a refund of tuition from the school in writing. Students may be eligible for a refund of all or part of tuition and other costs, such as those for books. More information on a particular school's refund policy can be found in its course catalog and/or enrollment agreement.

DISCHARGE OF LOAN

If students don't transfer or complete studies and they've received a federally subsidized loan, they may be eligible to have the loan discharged. Students should contact their lender or the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-4-FEDAID or obtain more information, including a loan-discharge application, online at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/>.

However, selecting discharges or refunds will likely result in the loss of credits already earned. There also may be other legal remedies available including a suit in small claims court.

If I file a complaint against a school before June 30th, what will happen to it?

The Bureau will make every attempt to mediate the complaint. If it is not resolved by June 30th, the Department is planning to forward any unresolved complaints to a successor agency for possible resolution.

How do I file a complaint against a school after July 1?

You can download a complaint form from the Bureau's Web site at bppve@dca.ca.gov and mail it to the above post office box, or you can email your complaint to the Department at bppve@dca.ca.gov.

The Department will make every effort to mediate the complaint if the resources are available to do so.

Since the Bureau will no longer be approving schools after July 1, where do I get further information about post-secondary schools?

We encourage you to refer to the section of the Bureau's Web site entitled "Helpful Resources for Schools and Students – Links"

<http://www.bppve.ca.gov/links.htm>.